

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

- 1-6. (Canceled)
7. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim **[[6]] 25**, wherein the schema uses XML, XML-DTD, or BNF Grammar.
8. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim **[[6]] 25**, wherein both parties use the one-way encryption key to derive a codebook from the dictionary.
9. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim **[[6]] 25**, wherein both parties never receive a **[[full]]** copy of the opposite party's negotiating position.
10. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim **[[6]] 25**, wherein the broker allows a party to see a list of potential negotiation partners and the party has the opportunity to make a selection of **[[acceptable]]** negotiating partners.
11. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 10, wherein each party may modify their negotiation position so that it is specific for each potential negotiating partner.
12. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim **[[6]] 25**, wherein the broker retains an historical record of the negotiation.
13. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim **[[6]] 25**, wherein the broker is unable to decrypt ~~the negotiation positions or~~ the basis-for-agreement.

14. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[6]]~~ 25, comprising concealing numerical values and value ranges in a partially encrypted negotiating position of a party by linear mapping of numerical values using a secret offset and secret scaling factor.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 14, comprising:
using the ~~one-way~~ encryption key, encrypting the name of a ~~[[value]]~~ named set of values as a number with $2n$ bits,
~~separating high order bits from low order bits~~ the $2n$ bits into two numbers of n bits, and
converting the two numbers of n bits to ~~[[an]]~~ the offset and the scaling factor which are then applied to values in the value set.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 29, further comprising developing the basis-for-agreement into a binding agreement by direct negotiation between the two parties.

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 29, wherein the negotiating position of each party is described in standardized markup language.

19. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 29, wherein one-way encryption is applied to nouns and adjectives in a negotiating position.

20. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 29, wherein conjunction, verbs and prepositions are non-encrypted in a negotiating position.

21. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 29, wherein the broker compares sentences in the negotiation positions without decoding encrypted

elements of the sentences, thereby allowing the broker to determine if there is a basis for a negotiated contract.

22. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 29, wherein the broker identifies grammatical rules for unencrypted keywords.

23. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 29, wherein data to be exchanged through the negotiation comprises intelligence data, price information, or intellectual property holdings.

24. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 29, wherein the negotiating is online.

25. (NEW) A method of negotiation, comprising:
conducting a negotiation between two parties through a broker;
wherein each party receives from the broker a dictionary of words for description of its negotiating positions, and a schema for descriptive statements in the negotiating position;
wherein the broker selects one party to begin negotiation;
wherein the party who is asked to begin negotiation sends an encryption key to the other party;
wherein each party applies the encryption key to partially encrypt its negotiating position so that identical terms encrypt to identical values;
wherein each party sends its partially encrypted negotiating position to the broker;
wherein said broker does not possess the encryption key and is unable to decrypt the negotiating positions,
wherein, upon receiving both partially encrypted negotiation positions, the broker compares them to discover whether there exists an encrypted statement that is common with both negotiating positions;

wherein the broker notifies each party about a basis-for-agreement;
wherein the broker provides the parties with a copy of an encrypted basis-for-agreement;
wherein each party decodes the basis-for-agreement.

26. (NEW) A method according to Claim 25, wherein the encryption key comprises a one-way encryption key algorithm.

27. (NEW) A method according to Claim 25, wherein the encryption key comprises a symmetric encryption key.

28. (NEW) A method of negotiating between parties,
wherein the negotiation is between two parties through a broker, each party sending a negotiating position to the broker,
wherein public key encryption protects information exchanges so that only an intended recipient can decrypt the information and authenticate the sender,
wherein the improvement comprises:
each party partially encrypting its negotiating positions so that identical terms encrypt to identical values;
each party sending the partially encrypted negotiating position to the broker,
wherein said broker is unable to decrypt the partially encrypted negotiating positions,
said broker comparing the partially encrypted negotiating positions to discover whether there exists an encrypted statement that is common with both negotiating positions,
said broker providing the parties with a copy of an encrypted basis-for-agreement; and
each party decoding the basis-for-agreement.

29. (NEW) A method of negotiation between parties, comprising:
each party enrolling with a broker,
said broker providing each party with a vocabulary to describe the subject
goods, services, information, or property to be exchanged through negotiation,
said broker pairing parties for negotiation wherein each party makes a selection
of negotiation partners,
said broker selecting one party to begin negotiation;
each party preparing a negotiation position according to the vocabulary provided
by the broker, said parties agreeing on an encryption key and applying the encryption
key to partially encrypt their negotiating positions so that identical terms encrypt to
identical values, wherein said broker does not possess the encryption key;
each party sending a partially encrypted negotiation position to the broker,
said broker comparing the partially encrypted negotiation positions and notifying
each party about a basis-for-agreement,
wherein if the parties agree to proceed with negotiation, said broker providing
each party with a copy of an encrypted basis-for-agreement, each of said parties
decoding the basis-for-agreement.